

Urban Renewal Meeting 11/22/2010

Citizen's Communication

I'm Eric Shropshire. I live, work and was raised in the community. Last week I spoke to the Board about why the Marshall Apartment proposal (the Marshall Plan) made good business sense besides being the responsible thing to do. This week I like to comment on the facts and applying common sense.

You will hear arguments against the Marshall Plan such as:

- It will bring down property values,
- The 20% Permanent Supportive Housing requirement will bring the wrong element of people to the neighborhood (drug addicts, mental illness, transitional housing) inciting fear among the residents,
- The city promised business and services to the area such as mixed-use projects and a grocery store.

Community stakeholders opposed to the Marshall Plan want to place up all these stop signs indicating, *"this project is not good for the neighborhood"*.

I would argue continuing to do nothing *"is not good for the neighborhood"*. Having boarded up buildings *"is not good for the neighborhood"*, unattended vacant lots *"is not good for the neighborhood"*, distressed businesses and lack of jobs *"is not good for the neighborhood"* nor for the economic vitality of the community.

I would ask the question if there was a run-down house along your block and a family (i.e., Islamic, scientologist, mentally challenge, etc.) wanted to purchase and fix it up, would it de-value the property on the block? I don't think so.

I would also ask does the overall benefits (80%) outweigh the possible downside (20%) and which would you consider? I think the benefit would be the best option, however that decision should be left to the individuals directly affected. (e.g. Marshall Apartment tenants and the residents and businesses abutting the property). Also get the crime statistic and meet with APD Commanders for the area.

And, finally I don't recall the City ever guaranteeing specific development projects and I'm not sure how that will work without meeting certain regulatory requirements and conditions. Plus lot sizes can't meet certain community request.

City of Austin 2005 Demographic Data

According to 2005 tracking data for Central East Austin there are over 5000 stakeholders in the area. The estimated* ethnic make-up of central east Austin is 48% Hispanic, 36% Black and 18% White and other.

* Based on limited tracking to the 2000 U.S. Census data. Economically disadvantage individuals (poor and homeless people) disproportionately make-up is black, brown and red.

In closing, there is no secret the ethnic make up the largest group of individuals opposed to the Marshall Plan. They will argue that they are reflective of the community but the facts do not support their claim. I would consider them the vocal minority, but not the community. Marshall Apartments has been a fixture in this neighborhood for over forty years and should certainly be part of the City's revitalization efforts.

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